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ABSTRACT

Allowing noncertified personnel to teach is a frequently proposed means of meeting teacher shortages or taking advantage of the expertise of people interested in teaching as a second career. This paper discusses the current teacher certification rules in Colorado and possible legislation for changing the rules. The educational needs in Colorado are briefly analyzed. Attachments include the present letters of authorization law and proposed administrative rule changes for the entry of non-educators into the profession. (JD)

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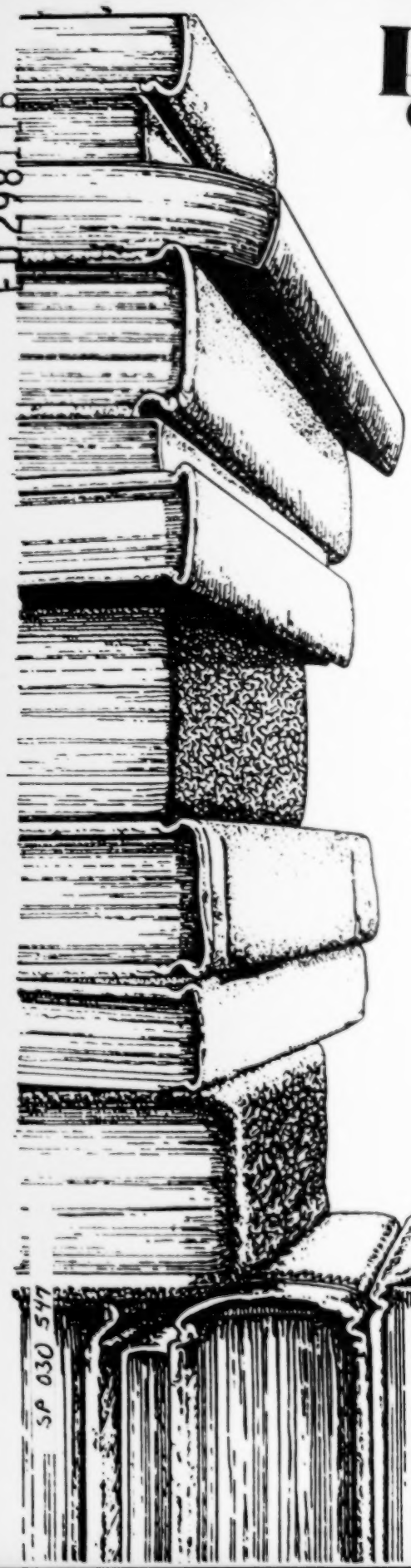

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ISSUES IN EDUCATION

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ISSUE PAPER #8602

ALTERNATIVES TO CERTIFICATION

February 1986

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ALTERNATIVES TO CERTIFICATION

Issue Paper

Revised February 1986

Prepared by Howard Brown

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Allowing noncertificated personnel to teach is a frequently proposed means of meeting teacher shortages or taking advantage of the expertise of second-career people interested in teaching. New Jersey has adopted a much talked about program allowing any college graduate to teach. This approach indicates an assumption that typical teacher preparation coursework is less valuable than subject expertise and that only a minimum of the former is necessary. Legislation would likely be necessary to take this approach, and it would not appear that Colorado desires to take such a stance at this time. The 2+2 report, due in July 1987 should address teacher supply and quality in a broad sense. Broad consideration of alternatives to certification could appropriately be postponed until after release of that report.

ISSUE PAPER

ALTERNATIVES TO CERTIFICATION

Issue

For reasons of meeting teacher shortages, utilizing subject area expertise and/or taking advantage of available otherwise qualified personnel, there is substantial interest in allowing noncertificated personnel to teach in elementary and secondary schools.

On a broad scale, any college graduate with competence in the field to be taught could be allowed to teach. New Jersey has adopted a program along these lines which is receiving wide attention. Under the New Jersey program, such teachers can be fully certificated after one year as an "intern", but certification would not necessarily have to follow. Such programs, particularly as in New Jersey where no "emergency" is necessary and certification can be obtained, can be viewed as a direct challenge to the necessity or value of college teacher education programs.

On a more limited scale, persons who have not gone through teacher education programs and met certification requirements can be allowed to teach in areas of specialized expertise or under shortage conditions. Recently, Georgia has actively recruited math and science teachers from Germany; Houston, Los Angeles and Louisiana have all hired large numbers of noncertificated teachers under "emergency shortage" conditions. Existing Colorado law (22-60-105) provides for letters of authorization to hire recognized experts (Type I) for specialized areas and emergency teachers (Type III) to meet shortage situations.

Rules

In March 1985, the Colorado State Board of Education adopted revised teacher certification rules. Draft versions of these rules had included provisions for allowing persons without education school training to teach. Essentially, this proposed rule change would establish an additional category of Type I authorization for persons with college degrees but not teacher education training. Such persons would have been required to complete an intensive teacher education program prior to teaching and work towards certification in order to have the letters of authorization renewed.

While still requiring education school training, these proposed rules would have been like the New Jersey model in that college graduates generally would have been allowed to teach. It is not clear that this would be in keeping with present law (22-60-105) which stipulates that a recognized expert "possesses outstanding talent in a particular area of specialization . . . and enjoys wide recognition as an authority in such area." (An earlier version of the draft provision would have granted Type II, intern, letters of authorization rather than Type I. The law for Type II would, however, have probably required the candidate to be enrolled in a regular teacher preparation program.)

It might also be possible by rule change to expand the utilization of Type III, emergency teacher, letters of authorization by establishing a mechanism for determining statewide shortages such as in math or science or for substitutes.

Legislation

Another avenue for allowing teaching by noncertificated personnel is, of course, new legislation. Preliminary research did not reveal any bills introduced along these lines in recent years. There is, however, strong interest in the area, so initiatives could be taken in the coming session with or without recommendation by the Department of Education.

Legislative efforts could be directed toward the broad New Jersey model or the more limited scope of directing greater use of "experts." Legislation would seem the most appropriate arena for the former, but might not be necessary for the latter.

Analysis

At its November 1985 meeting, the State Board of Education directed development of guidelines within existing rules to clarify and encourage appropriate use of type I letters of authorization for recognized experts. Such guidelines are being developed and should help to accommodate most situations where taking advantage of outstanding talent or expertise available to meet special school needs might otherwise be precluded because of lack of certification.

On the broader scale, Colorado is not presently facing a teacher shortage, nor is it likely to in the near future, except for within selected subject areas. Thus, any program for broad scale use of noncertificated personnel would imply that subject expertise or general knowledge is more valuable than teacher preparation programs. It would not appear that Colorado desires to take such a stance at this time. Such an alternative route to certification could also be seen as undermining current efforts to strengthen teacher preparation programs and certification requirements. In addition, the Department's 2+2 Program is conducting a broad and intensive investigation of teacher supply and of teacher quality. Consideration of major alternatives to certification could wait for the report of the 2+2 Program due in July 1987.

Attachments

- Present letters of authorization law (22-60-105)
- February 1, 1985, draft of proposed modification of type I letters of authorization rules (2260-R-3.01)

22-60-105. Letters of authorization - types - applicants' qualifications. (1) Pursuant to the rules of the state board of education, the department of education is authorized to issue the following letters of authorization to persons of good moral character meeting the qualifications prescribed by this section and by the rules of the state board of education:

(a) A letter of authorization, type I, recognized expert, certifies that a person possesses outstanding talent in a particular area of specialization and demonstrates ability and knowledge therein and enjoys wide recognition as an authority in such area. The teacher's services shall have been requested by a board of education and shall be limited to the area of specialization. A type I letter of authorization is renewable indefinitely upon request by a board of education.

(b) A letter of authorization, type II, intern, certifies that a person has been awarded at least a bachelor's degree from an accepted institution of higher education but has not completed the sequence of professional teacher education courses. A type II letter of authorization shall be valid only while the holder serves under the supervision of a certified teacher as an intern in a teacher preparation program offered by an accepted institution of higher education in Colorado which is approved by the state board of education.

(c) A letter of authorization, type III, emergency teacher, certifies a person to teach at a particular grade level or in a special academic or vocational area when in the judgment of the board of education an emergency exists due to a demonstrated shortage of teachers certified with appropriate endorsements and such action is essential to the preservation of good instructional programs in the public schools and to the educational well-being of the children enrolled therein. A type III letter of authorization shall be valid for a period of one school year and may be renewed.

ENTRY OF NON EDUCATORS INTO THE PROFESSION
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Proposed Administrative Rule Changes

3.01 A letter of Authorization, Type I Recognized Expert may be issued:

3.01(1) Upon request of a Colorado school district board of education when the position warrants special expertise and/or talents not available to the district through a fully certificated teacher and when the Colorado school district board of education verifies that the applicant possesses these unique talents and is best suited for the position. The applicant shall provide documentation of recognition of these talents. A Letter of Authorization, Type I, Recognized Expert, ISSUED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION, may be renewed upon request of a Colorado school district board of education. With the second and subsequent requests or renewals, the district shall submit an evaluation of the teacher's performance and attest to the continuing need to employ the non-certificated teacher.

3.01(2) UPON REQUEST OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION TO PERSONS HOLDING A DEGREE FROM AN ACCEPTED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION BUT LACKING COMPLETION OF AN APPROVED PROGRAM LEADING TO CERTIFICATION. SUCH PERSONS IDENTIFIED MUST MEET ADMISSION CRITERIA DESCRIBED IN SECTION 13.01(2) OF THESE RULES, MUST DEMONSTRATE PROFICIENCY IN BASIC SKILLS AND IN GENERAL KNOWLEDGE AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23.00, BUT HAVE NOT COMPLETED THE APPROVED PROGRAM LEADING TO CERTIFICATION. BEFORE ASSUMING ANY TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES OR BEING ISSUED A LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION, THE CANDIDATE MUST COMPLETE AN INTENSIVE PROGRAM, OFFERED BY AN ACCEPTED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, WHICH INCLUDES LEARNING THEORY, ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE, AND METHODS OF TEACHING. THIS LETTER OF AUTHORIZATON MAY BE RENEWED NO MORE THAN THREE TIMES, EACH BASED UPON SATISFACTORY PROGRESS AS DETERMINED BY THE INSTITUTION TOWARD COMPLETION OF THE APPROVED PROGRAMS AT AN ACCEPTED INSTITUTION FOR FULL PROVISONAL CERTIFICATION.

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* Lower case indicates current rules *
* Upper case indicates proposed rule *
* changes *
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